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HOURLY DISTRIBUTION AND INTENSITY OF PRECIPITATION AT KANSAS CITY, MO.

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The climatic records of Kansas City, in the heart of the Midwestern agricultural belt, are to be considered as representative of the greater part of that area, especially northwestern Missouri, northeastern Kansas, southwest-

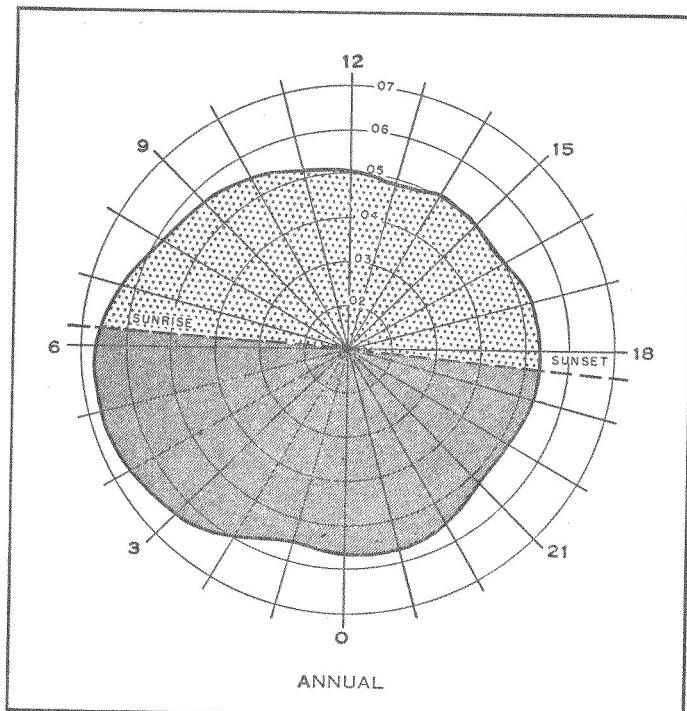


FIGURE 1.—Hourly distribution of precipitation throughout the day, entire year considered, at Kansas City, Mo., 1911-40.

ern Iowa and southeastern Nebraska. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the distribution of precipitation in the Kansas City area is of the type most favorable to plant growth, i. e., predominantly during nighttime hours. Considering the year as a whole, 64 percent of measurable precipitation falls between sunset and sunrise, and 77 percent falls between 11 p. m. and 11 a. m. (See fig. 1.) A study of figure 2 shows a rather sharp line of demarcation between the distribution during the dormant, or winter season, and during the vegetal, or growing season. During the dormant period there is but a slight variation of frequency throughout the 24 hours, the maximum being between 3 and 4 a. m. However, during the vegetal period, with the maximum frequency at sunrise, 88 percent of the hours with measurable precipitation are between 11 p. m. and 11 a. m. A study of figure 3, showing the distribution of precipitation by months, reveals that January shows two periods of maximum frequency, the major between 3 a. m. and 6 a. m. with a minor between 11 a. m. and 12 noon, and a definite period of minimum

frequency between 7 and 9 p. m. In February the distribution is even more equitable, with maxima at 3 a. m. and 4 p. m. and minima at 7 p. m. and 9 p. m.

Although March maintains a fairly equitable distribution, there is now first evidence of a swing to summer trend. A definite maximum period of frequency between 5 and 7 a. m., and a minimum between 9 and 10 p. m. are indicated. April is the first month to show the frequency common to the vegetal period, with a prominent maximum between 5 and 6 a. m., and an equally pronounced minimum between 3 and 5 p. m. In April, 82 percent of the hours with measurable precipitation fall between 9 p. m. and 9 a. m.

While throughout the greater part of the year a preponderance of the measurable precipitation occurs during nighttime, in May the preponderance swings into the daylight period. With maxima at 4 a. m. and at 7 a. m., and a definite minimum at noon, 73 percent of hours with measurable rainfall lie between 11 p. m. and 11 a. m. June, also, shows a pronounced tendency toward daylight hours, 70 percent of the hours with precipitation falling between midnight and noon, with a frequency maximum between 4 a. m. and 7 a. m., and a minimum at 1 p. m. In July, but 38 percent of hours with measurable rainfall lie between sunset and sunrise, and a vast preponderance (86 percent) between the hours of 10 p. m. and 10 a. m. with a pronounced frequency maximum at 6 a. m., and minima at 11 a. m., 2 p. m. and 9 p. m.

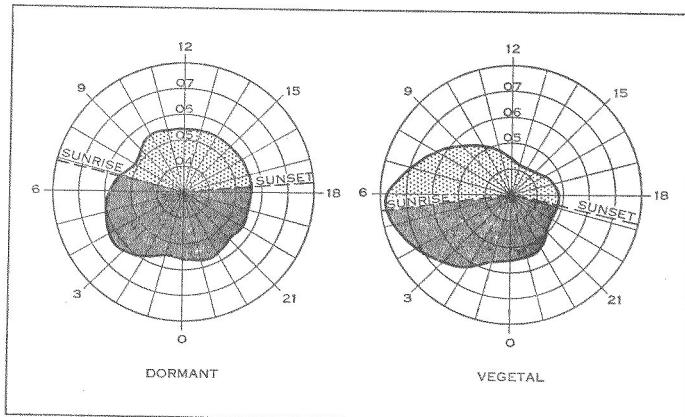


FIGURE 2.—Hourly distribution of precipitation throughout the day for the vegetal and dormant seasons of the year at Kansas City, Mo., 1911-40.

In August, hours with precipitation are again more frequent between sunset and sunrise, although 82 percent of the total lie between 10 p. m. and 10 a. m., with a definite frequency maximum at 6 a. m. and a minimum between 3 and 4 p. m. In September, although the bulk of hours with rainfall lie during the night period, 91 percent of these hours lie between 11 p. m. and 11 a. m., with a definite frequency maximum at 6 a. m. and a minimum from 3 to 9 p. m.

In October, there is a tendency to revert to the distribution common to the dormant period. Maxima occur at 5 a. m. and at 9-10 a. m., with minima at 2 p. m. and from 12-1 p. m. In November, a fairly equable distribution prevails with a frequency maximum 9-10 p. m. and a minimum at 9 a. m. In December, maxima are recorded at

tion of the times that measurable precipitation actually occurred to the times possible in the 30-year period, while in table 3 the relation is between the times that measurable precipitation was recorded and the total hours of precipitation for the month within the period of study. In preparing the data for presentation, they were smoothed by

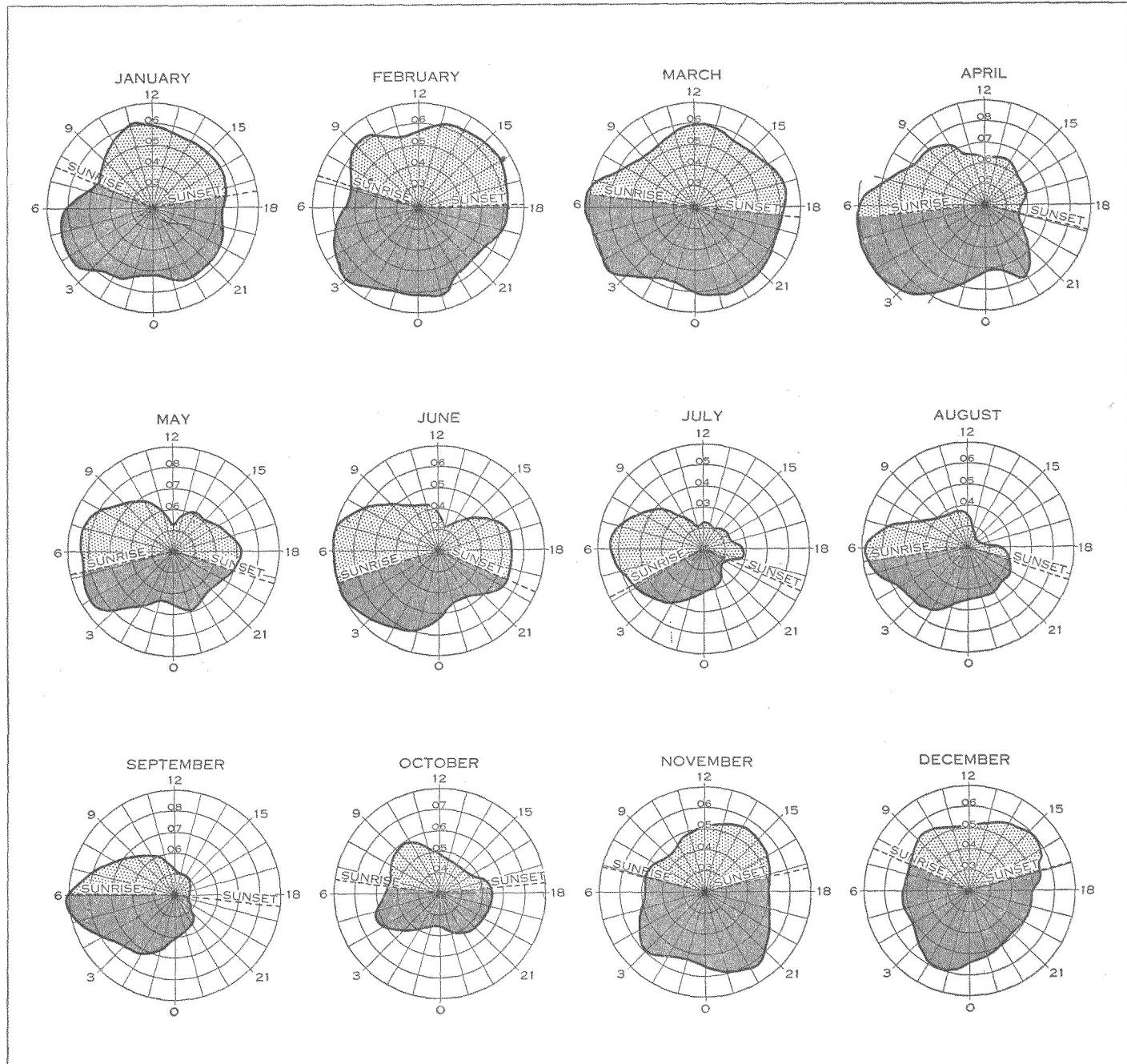


FIGURE 3.—Distribution of measurable precipitation throughout the day, by months, at Kansas City, Mo., 1911-40.

3 p. m. and from 1-2 a. m., with minima at 7 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Figure 4 presents these distribution values in terms of number of times measurable rain was actually recorded; and figure 5 in actual amounts of rainfall measured for the several hours during the 30-year period of study.

Tables 1 to 4 are self-explanatory. In table 2 it is to be noted that the percentage value tabulated is the rela-

the formula $\frac{a+2b+c}{4}$ in order to emphasize their salient characteristics and to eliminate or reduce sporadic fortuitous variations.

In the study of intensities and their distribution it is to be noted, from figures 6, 7, and 8, that there is no apparent relation between the period of maximum intensity and the period of greatest frequency. In fact, it is for the most

part true that throughout the year the maximum intensity, or greatest fall of rain per hour, occurs at or near the period of minimum frequency. Compare the two figures for April, May, July, August, and October, especially. From January to June the heaviest rainfall occurs during the daylight hours. In July the maximum intensity centers about 11 p. m., the secondary maximum in June lying between midnight and 2 a. m. In August the two maxima are at night, at 8 p. m. and 2 a. m., with a third period of intensity at 11 a. m. In September, the two maxima are at 3 a. m. and 8 a. m., while in October there is a definite shift the other way, with maxima at 10 p. m. and 5 p. m. In November and December the period of maximum

area at all, the probabilities appear to be heavily in favor of its fall during the early morning hours. Afternoon precipitation is more infrequent but heavier, on an average, although a study of the excessive values (1.00 inch or more per hour) will show a fairly even distribution around the clock, with a minimum in the early afternoon, and maxima at several points from 6 p. m. to 10 a. m.

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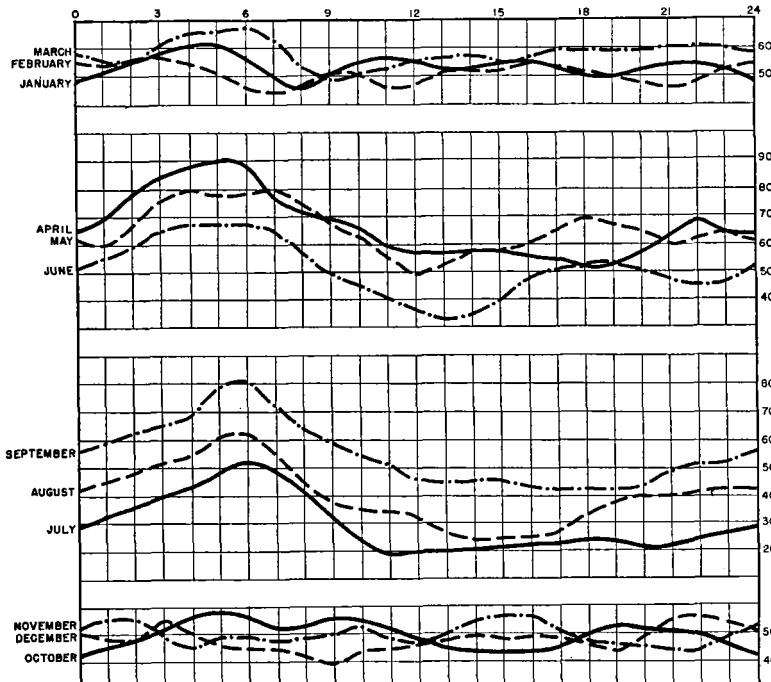


FIGURE 4.—Hourly relative frequency of precipitation at Kansas City, Mo., by months, in terms of percentage of average number of hourly recordings, 1911-40.

intensity returns to daylight hours, being at 3 p. m. in November and at 7 a. m. in December.

Table 5 presents these data in actual values, and table 6 shows the heaviest hourly recording for each month of the period studied.

For purposes of local forecasting, the past data on distribution of precipitation may prove of value. For instance, there are no definite periods of maximum frequency in January, February and March; but in April, measurable precipitation is 30 percent more frequent between 2 and 7 a. m. than between 5 and 8 p. m. In May, measurable rain is 25 percent more likely between 3 and 4 a. m. than 11 a. m. and noon. In June, the relative frequency of precipitation between 2 and 7 a. m. is 62 percent, while between 12 noon and 1 p. m. it is but 30 percent, a difference of 32 percent. In July, measurable rain is 32 percent more likely between 5 and 6 a. m. than between 11 a. m. and 3 p. m., and in August 29 percent more between 4 and 6 a. m. than between 1 and 5 p. m. In September, precipitation is 38 percent more frequent between 4 and 6 a. m. than between 4 and 8 p. m., while in October it is but 26 percent more likely between 4 and 7 a. m. than between 3 and 5 p. m.

In November and December the intensities as well as the distribution return to the equitable character of the winter months. As a rule, whenever precipitation of measurable amount is to be expected in the Kansas City

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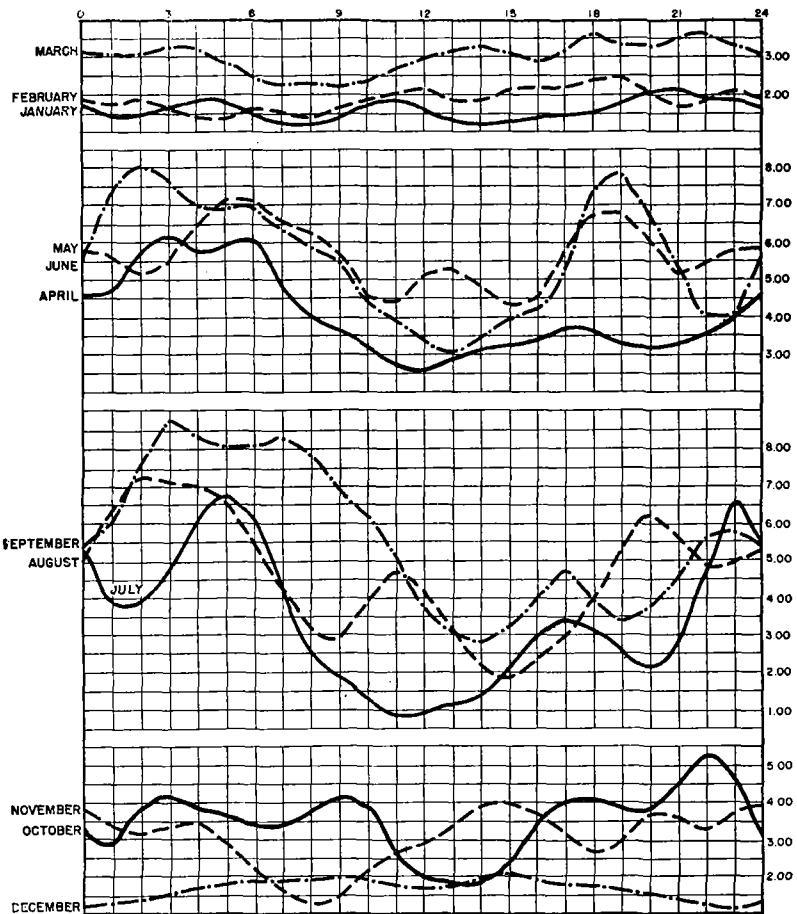


FIGURE 5.—Distribution of precipitation at Kansas City, Mo., hourly by months, in terms of total amount of precipitation recorded, 1911-40.

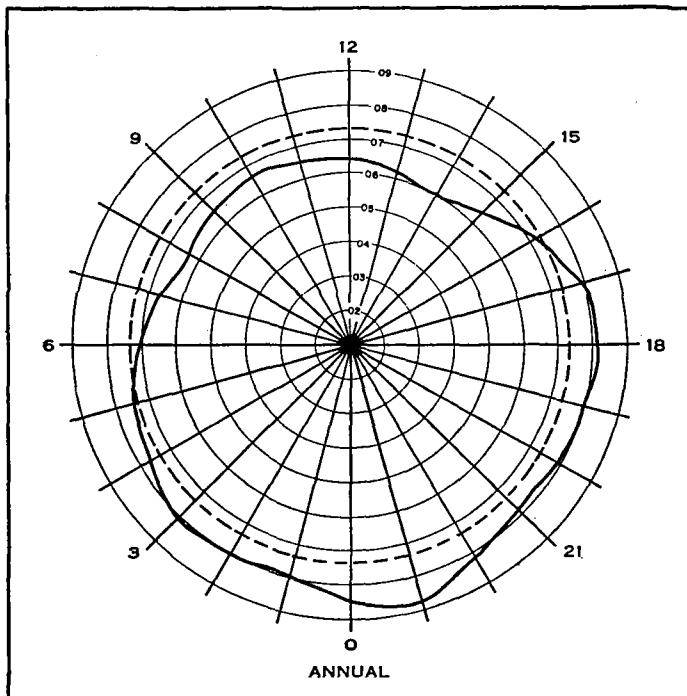


FIGURE 6.—Hourly intensity of precipitation, full yearly records, at Kansas City, Mo., 1911-40.

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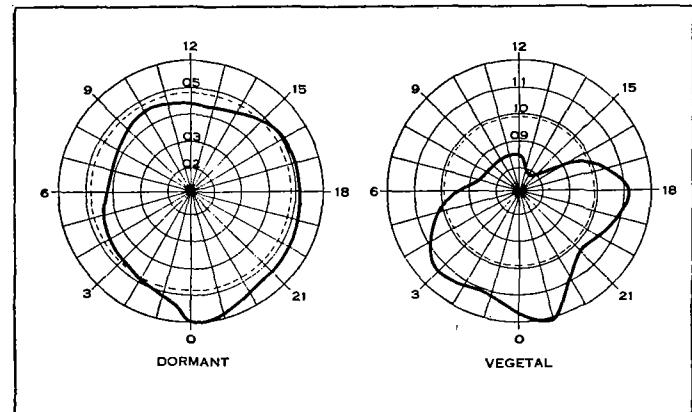


FIGURE 7.—Hourly intensity of precipitation at Kansas City, Mo., during the vegetal and dormant seasons of the year, 1911-40.

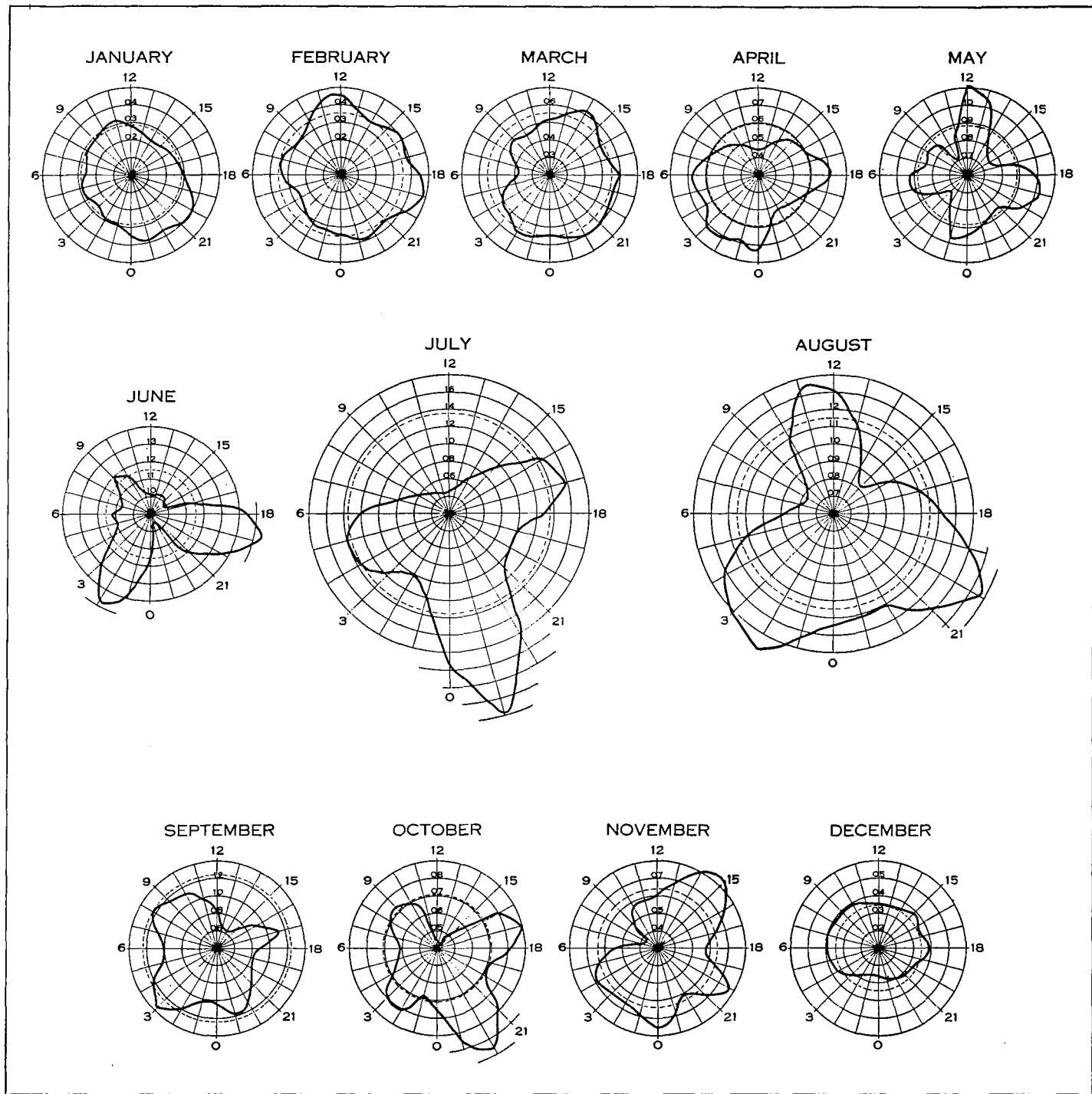


FIGURE 8.—Hourly intensity of precipitation by months at Kansas City, Mo., 1911-40.

